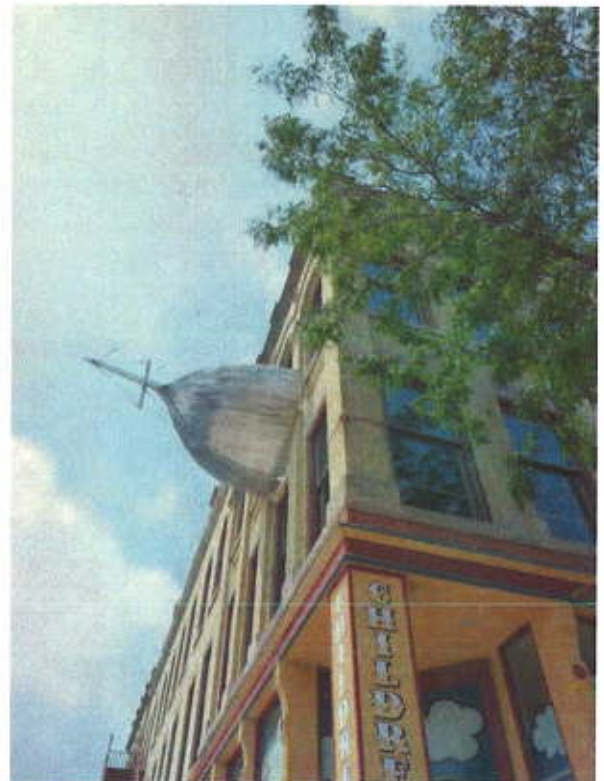


Harbor Centre Master Plan

CITY OF SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN

2014



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Executive Summary

The Plan

The Harbor Centre Master Plan represents the next stage of Sheboygan's ongoing commitment to revitalize the downtown and waterfront, recognizing that these assets set Sheboygan apart as a destination. This master planning effort builds on previous initiatives and projects which have transformed portions of the lakeshore and riverfront, creating hospitality, entertainment and shopping destinations as well as quality residential neighborhoods complete with attractive public open space amenities. This plan unites and connects these diverse assets, while also providing strategies for creating additional activity centers along 8th Street and other key locations throughout Harbor Centre.

The Master Plan was created using a three phase approach:

1. Existing conditions assessment
2. Competitive Assessment and Strategic Recommendations
3. Implementation Planning

Each phase was combined with significant public outreach and engagement, including individual interviews with local stakeholders, focus groups, a public open house, and an online survey. The three phases provide a holistic approach to determining Sheboygan's competitive opportunities within the market while also assessing the role of the built environment in supporting market growth.

Land Use, Streetscape and Connections

The Harbor Centre boundary is represented by the Business Improvement District, which includes all or part of 27 blocks, as shown in Map 0.1 on page 3. Due to its large size and diverse history, the area includes multiple activity nodes and a wide variety of architectural styles. Some of these styles are the result of master planning activities which established design guidelines for the Riverfront and South Pier areas, while development along the 8th Street area represents decades of individual development efforts. Although this varied development pattern has precluded the City from establishing designated historic districts in the corridor, there are numerous examples of well-preserved historic structures and

well-designed modern structures which create an appealing aesthetic.

An assessment of visitor counts, circulation patterns and parking data indicates several distinct activity centers in and adjacent to the BID. These centers, in order of magnitude by visitor traffic, include:

- Arts & Culture District Centered at North 8th Street & Niagara Avenue
- South Pier District
- Riverfront District
- Michigan Avenue Entertainment District
- Marina & Lakeshore

These districts are complemented by a number of individual destination businesses and attractions, including Fountain Park, City Hall, the Military Heritage Museum and numerous popular shops and restaurants. Most visitors travel between these areas by car, although bike lanes are present downtown.

Each of the major activity centers incorporates additional streetscape elements as part of the urban fabric. These elements include street trees and decorative light poles at regular intervals along 8th Street, Riverfront and South Pier Drive. Decorative planters are also present on 8th Street, along with decorative pavers along the sidewalk and curb bump outs along 8th Street. Additional streetscape enhancements are provided along the riverwalk and lakeshore paths, and the John Michael Kohler Art Center has installed a number of murals and pole mounted banners surrounding its block.

The topography, street grid and presence of the Sheboygan River create connectivity challenges for visitors to the district. These challenges include both real and perceived issues, including limited connections across the River, minimal wayfinding signage, limited bicycle facilities and the presence of vacant or under-utilized blocks along key pedestrian connections in addition to the length of the district, which spans more than one mile along 8th Street.

Market Analysis

Although no longer the primary commercial and retail center of Sheboygan, Harbor Centre still plays a significant role in the City's economy. The dominant industry cluster is tourism and hospitality, with Harbor Centre hotels accounting for 63 percent of Sheboygan's hotel rooms. On an average weekend in the summer, the number of hotel guests in downtown increases the downtown population by half. Based on information from leading retail and demographic provider ESRI, one-half of all outside retail spending in the City of Sheboygan occurs within the Harbor Centre area.

Harbor Centre also represents a year-round destination for the companies, workers and residents who call downtown home. There are nearly 5,000 individuals who travel downtown to work each day, and 2,700 residents which generate evening and weekend activity. Workers include a diverse array of retail, service, professional and technical employment in both the public and private sectors. Harbor Centre provides professional and retail space opportunities for many of the City's small businesses and accommodates a diverse mix of residential units.

Looking to the future, there is opportunity for market growth within the BID. There are more than 20 acres of undeveloped land, including municipally owned parcels in a variety of sizes and locations. Additional under-utilized parcels represent opportunities for infill and redevelopment within the City's core. If Harbor Centre continues to attract its share of anticipated growth within the City, the next ten years could witness the addition of more than 1,300 workers and nearly 400 residential units, with increased consumer demand of more than \$11.5 million. Many of the fastest growing retail, business and residential segments are associated with common downtown property types, including professional space, restaurants, service businesses, and apartments. As Harbor Centre development gains momentum, these trends could expand development potential.

Key Strategies for Harbor Centre

Three key strategies were developed for Harbor Centre based on findings from the market analysis, land use assessment, and input from key stakeholders and the public. These three strategies, outlined below, will create a unique identity and focus efforts on initiatives which will generate additional activity and investment in the district:

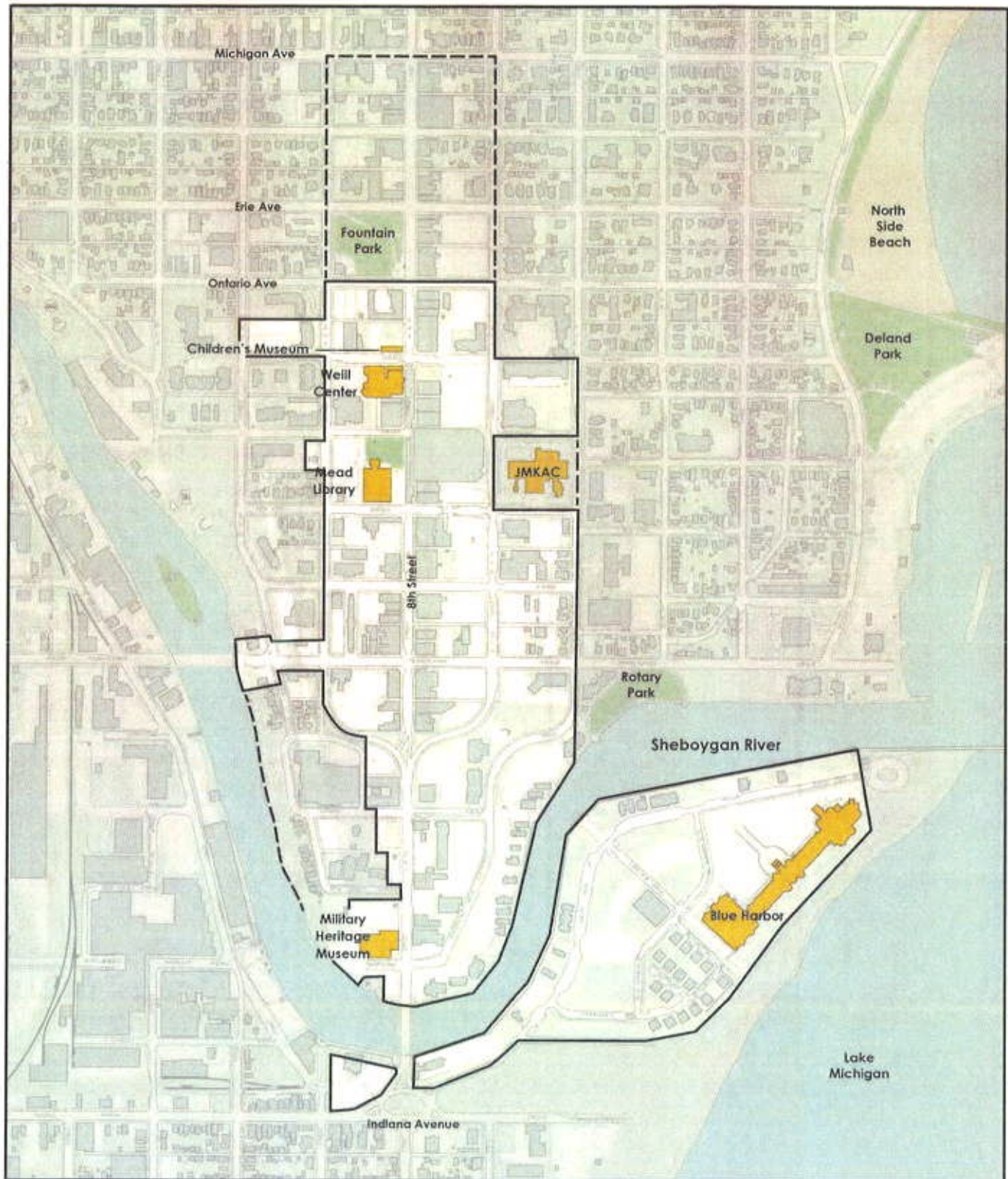
1. Leverage Sheboygan's Arts, Culture and Food Heritage. This strategy capitalizes on an unparalleled strength of Harbor Centre, namely, the presence of world class art and culture offerings and a wide variety of distinctive culinary options. Taken together, these elements are already generating a large percentage of individual trips to the Harbor Centre. When effectively coordinated, marketed, and supported with arts and culture programming, Harbor Centre can expand its customer base while also increasing the number and duration of visits from existing markets.

2. Encourage Market Supported Housing and Urban Development. In contrast to many communities, Sheboygan has a number of undeveloped parcels in and adjacent to Harbor Centre which provides cost-effective opportunities for infill development. Additionally, market projections point toward increased demand for uses that are well-suited for Harbor Centre environment, such as apartment, small-scale professional and retail spaces.

3. Enhance Connections and Cross-Marketing within Harbor Centre. In order maximize the Harbor Centre experience for visitors and leverage the presence of multiple complementary destinations, Harbor Centre needs to improve connections between geographic and activity centers within the district. By increasing awareness of complementary activities, and improving the ability to travel throughout the district, customers will be more inclined to spend more time (and money) in the district.

Successfully implementing these three key strategies will require the participation and cooperation of a number of public and private sector partners. By leveraging the strengths and resources of the Sheboygan community, Harbor Centre has the potential to make great strides in achieving its vision over the next five years and beyond.

Map 0.1 BID Boundary



- Legend**
- CURRENT BID BOUNDARY
 - - - POTENTIAL BID EXPANSION
 - MAJOR DESTINATION/TRAFFIC GENERATOR



Project History & Background

The Harbor Centre Business Improvement District (BID) was created in 1992. As the role of downtown Sheboygan has changed within the region, the BID has grown and evolved. At present, the BID includes 139 acres and three distinct districts: 8th Street, Riverfront and South Pier. Harbor Centre includes a number of locally cherished institutions and regional draws, including the John Michael Kohler Art Museum, Weill Center for the Performing Arts, Mead Library and Blue Harbor Resort. Newer additions to the mix include the Military Heritage Museum, SpacePort and Children's Museum. Complemented by more than 100 restaurant, retail, hospitality and service businesses, Harbor Centre is the central hub of Sheboygan entertainment and tourism activity.

The City of Sheboygan, Sheboygan Chamber of Commerce and BID have historically worked collaboratively on issues affecting Harbor Centre. The Redevelopment Authority (RDA) has also been instrumental in initiating redevelopment and renovation efforts in Harbor Centre. Most recently, the South Pier project restored a 42-acre former Brownfield site to productive use through a monumental \$75 million, 10-year (and counting) effort that has included \$24 million in public funding from the EPA, DNR and City. The Water Street residential area on the riverfront west of downtown is also the result of coordinated efforts that combined \$6 million in City Tax Increment Financing (TIF), \$2 million in HUD Section 8 and

Section 42 funds, \$1 million in CDBG funds, and \$15 million in private sector dollars to create 225 residential units in a formerly industrial area.

Past planning efforts, including the first two Harbor Centre plans, South Pier development plan and Riverfront development plan, have focused on specific geographic areas, specific projects or specific market elements, but a comprehensive effort has never been developed to link existing plans, coordinate efforts and incorporate organizational and operational recommendations with design and land use planning considerations.

Following a change in leadership and a failed attempt to disband the organization, the BID board held a retreat in early 2013 to begin planning for the future. One of the key recommendations at this retreat was to develop a strategic plan for the BID. This document reflects that objective, providing an overall vision and series of recommendations for the Harbor Centre area while also establishing organizational structure and operational tools for BID coordination with strategic partners.



South Pier represents the culmination of the efforts of many groups, including the RDA, BID, Sheboygan Development Corporation, Friends of Sheboygan, City and Chamber of Commerce, to redevelop a former brownfield site as a destination resort, condominium homes, shops, restaurants, a mini golf course and lakeside recreational trail. Image credit: blueharborresort.com

Overview of Process and Stakeholder Input

This Plan was created through a four-month process which took place in the fall of 2013. The planning process included a variety of opportunities for public input during each of four major phases, as illustrated in the graphic below. The process was designed to provide a holistic look at Harbor Centre by incorporating analytical and anecdotal information to fully assess the district's performance in the market. Analytical information included a market analysis, competitive position assessment and physical streetscape and infrastructure assessment using primary and secondary data from a variety of sources. Similarly, input from residents, businesses, property owners and economic development and real estate professionals was used to evaluate and test findings and identify perceptions which have influenced business and market activities. Combined, these inputs were used to develop a set of recommended strategies and action items which will positively influence the future economic vitality of Harbor Centre. Below is an overview of the primary outreach activities which were conducted as part of the Master Planning process:

Master Planning Steering Committee: A 15-member steering committee comprised of BID board members, representative businesses from each area of Harbor Centre and City staff was responsible for overseeing the process. These individuals met monthly during the Planning process, and provided feedback on each of the steps in the process. The group also marketed

the plan, engaging various stakeholder groups and soliciting feedback from individuals and entities within the community to increase public awareness and support of the Plan.

Large Scale Public Workshop: A public workshop was held at the John Michael Kohler Art Center (JMKAC) and attracted nearly 150 participants. The workshop featured a presentation on global trends impacting downtown Sheboygan, identified opportunities for Sheboygan to capitalize on demographic and consumer spending opportunities, and gave an opportunity for participants to provide feedback and ask questions at a variety of stations.



Steering Committee members helped identify the vision and objectives for the Plan.

Figure 2.0: Planning Process



Public Input/Outreach



In addition to these specific strategies, a public survey was conducted, which received more than 650 responses regarding future ideas and desires for Harbor Centre. Collectively, this input substantially influenced the vision, strategies, and recommendations for the Harbor Centre Master Plan.



Mapping and goal setting exercises encouraged participants to think critically about Harbor Centre's current and future role in the community. The map above shows the most popular destinations for public meeting participants.



Survey respondents identified more than 50 businesses and amenities as among their favorite Harbor Centre destinations.

Harbor Centre Overview

Location and Context

The Harbor Centre is located on the Lake Michigan Waterfront, on the eastern edge of the City of Sheboygan. Although the Business Improvement District is the primary subject of this analysis, several key destinations with significant economic impact to the community are located just outside its boundaries, as are several significant residential, retail and employment nodes. For these reasons, the market analysis also included the economic activity generated by uses within a roughly 2-block radius of the BID, hereafter referred to as Downtown Sheboygan. This area includes the emerging entertainment market on Michigan Avenue, multifamily residential developments along the riverfront, major employers such as the County, and significant local destinations including the John Michael Kohler Art Center, Marina, and Yacht Club. The above boundary also more closely corresponds to census tract block groups used to develop residential market estimates. These individual boundaries are illustrated on Map 3.0.

Traffic & Circulation

Traffic to Harbor Centre includes local and regional visitors. The district is accessible via regional bicycle routes, including the Union Pacific Trail. Pedestrian travel from adjacent neighborhoods, especially to the north and east, is also convenient, with designated bike routes on both 7th and 9th Street. However, the vast majority of visitors arrive by car, entering Harbor Centre at Indiana Avenue, Erie Avenue and Michigan Avenue (via North 8th Street). Regional travelers exit Interstate 43 from the south at Hwy 28/S Business Drive which becomes S 14th Street and intersects many east-west streets in downtown, or from the north/west at Hwy 23/

Map 3.0 Analysis Area Boundaries



Kohler Memorial Drive which becomes Erie Avenue. Traffic counts are shown on Map 3.1.

Map 3.1: Harbor Centre Traffic Counts



Legend

- MAJOR DESTINATION/TRAFFIC GENERATOR
- ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC, 2008



The presence of multiple gateways to downtown, coupled with the use of 7th and 9th Streets as primary travel and parking corridors, results in limited through traffic on 8th Street, increasing the pedestrian friendliness of the street from Virginia to Erie Avenues. Parallel or angled parking along both sides of the street further serves to buffer pedestrian traffic from car traffic, and car traffic is required to stop at each intersection, providing plenty of pedestrian crossing opportunities. Pedestrian amenities are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Population

Harbor Centre is home to 2,698 of the City's 50,000 residents, with remarkably low vacancy rates (meaning that downtown housing is in high demand). Jobs in a variety of professions, from Finance and Real Estate to Manufacturing, bring 4,857 workers to 245 companies in the area each weekday. The district's cultural and culinary offerings draw 635,000 visitors each year, and almost 30% of them decide to spend the night at one of the five hotels in the area.



Streetscaping, parking, and storefronts along 8th Street.



Examples of downtown housing (above) and lodging (below).



Figure 3.0: Infographic

At a Glance: HARBOR CENTRE

DOWNTOWN/RIVERFRONT/SOUTH PIER | SHEBOYGAN

Home to **2,698**
Guys & Gals



27 Blocks of
FUN



A Popular **DESTINATION**



45,500
Event Attendees



183,000
Overnight Guests



635,000
Visitors

A Place to Grow Your
BUSINESS



A Place to **INVEST**



A Diverse Business
MIX



Who Chooses **HARBOR CENTRE?**
Daytime Workforce: **4,857**



Personal Services



Manufacturing & Construction



Professional & Technical



Finance & Real Estate



Government & Education



Hospitality & Retail

Economic & Market Analysis

An understanding of the economic and market conditions which drive Sheboygan's growth and development is essential in identifying competitive opportunities for Harbor Centre's future. Harbor Centre will compete for investment activity with other commercial destinations within the City and region. By creating a vision which embraces demographic, business and economic factors shaping the region and capitalizing on unique market opportunities in Harbor Centre, local initiatives will be more successful and results more immediate. This chapter provides an overview of trends and activity in individual business sectors and identifies a set of market opportunities for Harbor Centre. The Harbor Centre economy is also summarized in the infographic on the facing page. The area included in the market analysis primarily focuses on the BID itself. Employment and business trends are also explored for the area within two blocks of the BID boundary (downtown) in order to capture the significant economic activity which occurs immediately adjacent to downtown.

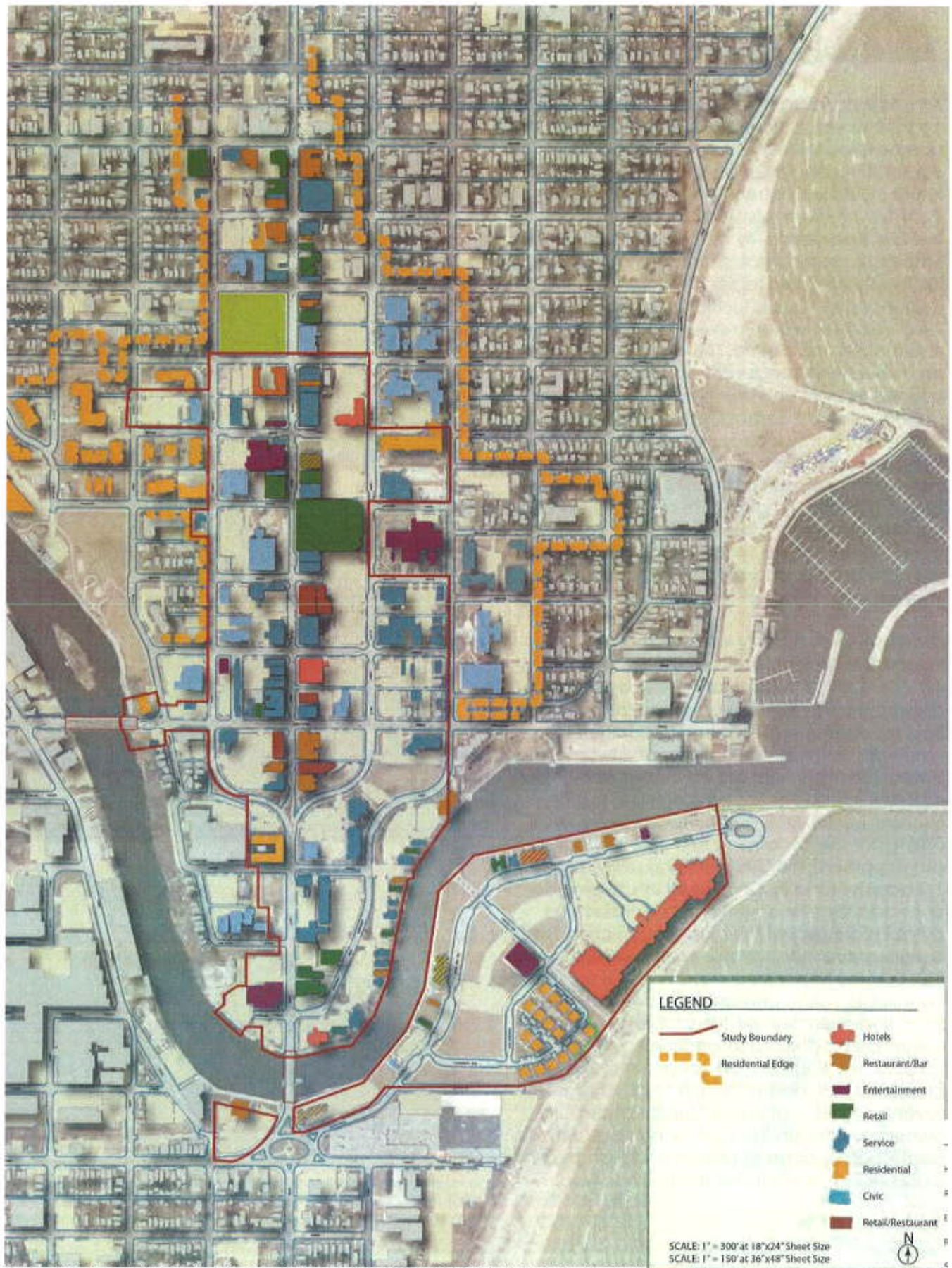
Land Use and Property Values

Harbor Centre land uses are shown on Map 4.0. There are a number of mixed-use buildings downtown with first floor commercial and upper floor residential or office uses. In addition to its numerous commercial and hospitality amenities, Harbor Centre is home to numerous non-profits and municipal functions, including the John Michael Kohler Art Center, Mead Library, Weill Center for the Performing Arts and City Hall, among others. The City's parking utility also owns 1.2 acres of land in 9 individual lots to provide public parking for downtown businesses. The combined effect of this clustering of civic uses is a high ratio of non-taxable properties within the BID. In total, 30 percent of parcels in the BID have no taxable value, and an additional 3 percent have improvements on the property. There is significant potential to introduce additional taxable development on vacant or under-utilized properties included within this total. At present, seventeen acres of vacant land is under City ownership through the CDA or parking utility. An additional 3.5 acres of private undeveloped land is also included within the BID boundaries.



A wide variety of architectural styles and development types are represented in the Harbor Centre boundaries.

Map 4.0: Harbor Centre Land Uses



The ratio between improvement values and land values for properties is shown in Map 4.1 to illustrate the relative utilization of properties occupied by taxable uses. An improvement to land value ratio of 1.0 means that the value of the improvements is equal to the value of the underlying land. In healthy economic areas, the ratio of improvement to land should be at least 2.0, indicating that the value of improvement is twice the value of the land. Harbor Centre has a number of highly valued parcels, including the US Bank Building, the Grandstay, the Nemschoff Building and the historic block of 8th Street between New York and Center Avenues.

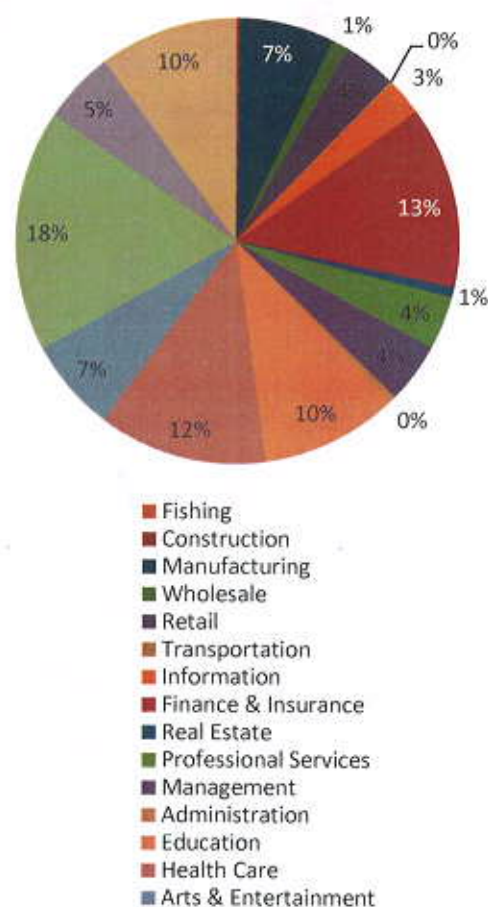
Employment and Business Mix

There are a surprisingly large number of employees working downtown at companies large and small in spite of the few traditional high rise office buildings. InfoUSA recorded 4,857 full and part time workers at businesses within the BID, and an additional 2,051 employees working within the overall downtown. Although the hospitality and restaurant industry is heavily represented within this employment base (18% of all employees), finance and insurance, health care, transportation and government each employ 10 percent or more of all workers. These downtown employees work at 245 total employers, with more than 70 percent of all businesses employing less than 10 employees. The makeup of companies by size is very closely correlated to the ratio for the City as a whole, with the exception of large companies (100 or more employees) where downtown presence is limited to Nemschoff, Community Bank and HSA Bank.

Retail and Tourism

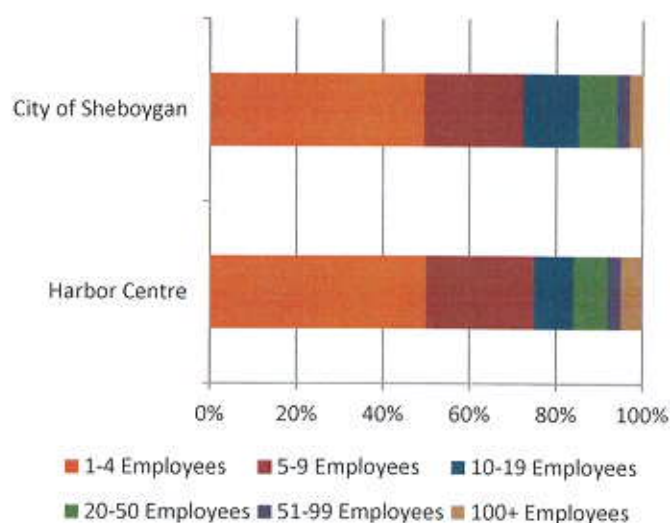
According to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Sheboygan County ranks 14th in the State for overall tourism spending, with \$191 million in direct spending 2012. This activity is split between Sheboygan and other notable tourism destinations such as Kohler, Sheboygan Falls and Plymouth. The presence of numerous well-regarded destinations within a relatively small geographic area provides visitors with multiple attractions and attracts a broader range of individuals. Hotels within Harbor Centre comprise 63 percent of all hotel rooms within the City, while ESRI data indicates that 50 percent of all outside dollars to the community are spent in downtown. Coupled with the presence of noted attractions and world-class dining, it is likely that virtually all travelers to the City visit downtown during their stay.

Graph 4.0 Employment by Industry



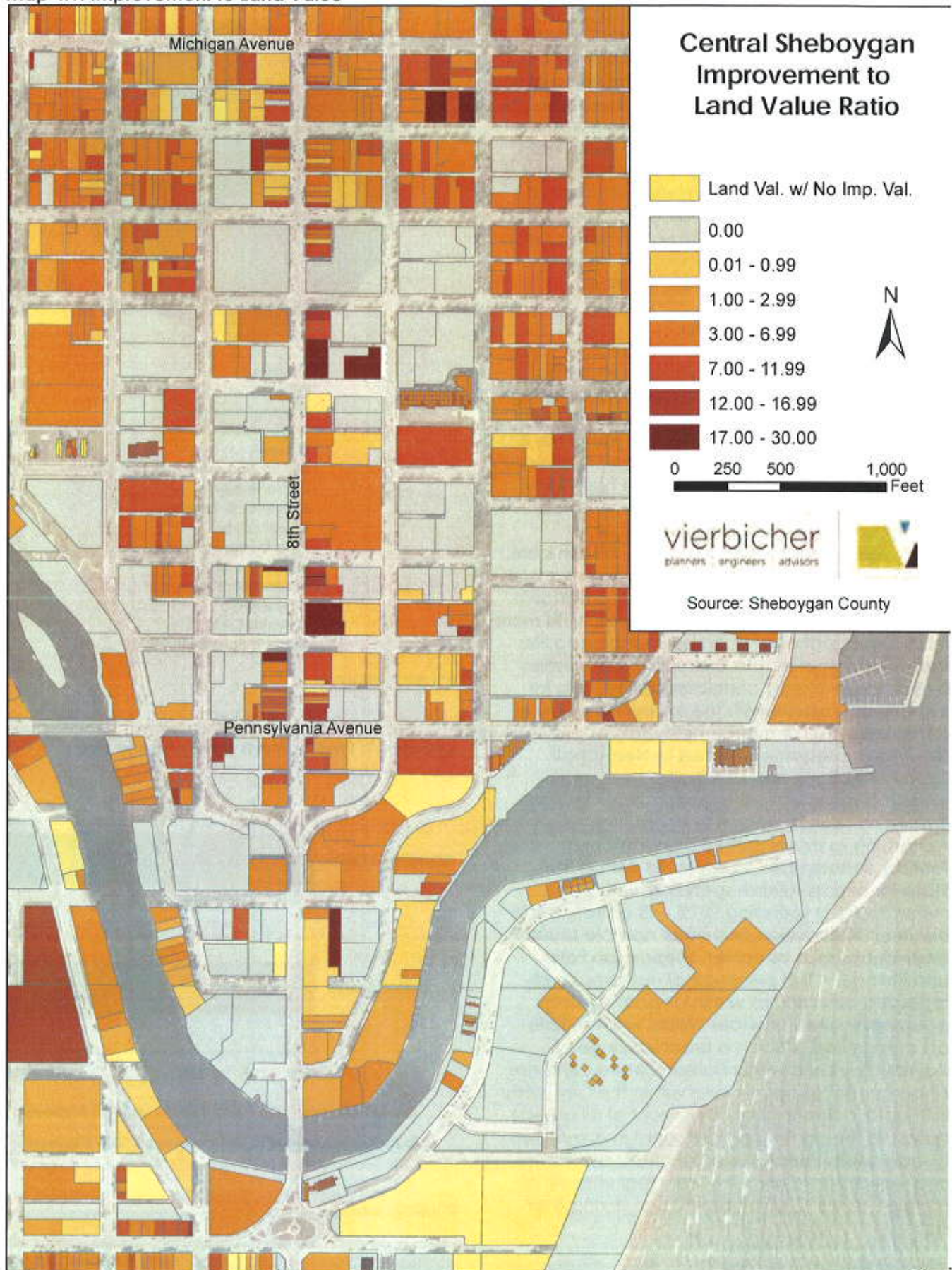
SOURCE: InfoUSA

Graph 4.1: Employment by Company Size



SOURCE: InfoUSA

Map 4.1: Improvement to Land Value



In addition to seasonal visitor activity, Harbor Centre is a shopping, dining and entertainment destination for local and regional residents. The numerous events held in and around downtown attract a significant number of local and day-trip visitors, while the City's 50,000 residents and nearly 5,000 downtown employees are also significant contributors to the retail sales.

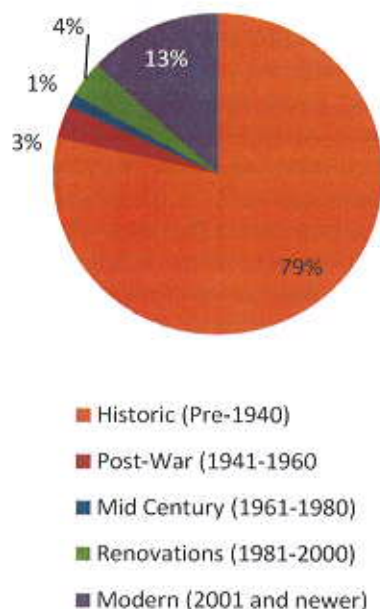
Demographics and Housing

Increasing apartment demand is an economic factor at a national level. An estimated 1.4 million apartment units were reportedly under construction as of the second quarter of 2013, according to the National Multi Housing Council. This wave of apartment development is driven in part by available financing for this product type and demand from households with limited financial means following the recession. It is also driven by low vacancy, diminished product delivery over the last two decades, and the growing presence of households in demographic segments more likely to rent than own, including younger and older households, immigrant households and relocating workers. Over the next decade, the aging population will create a 50 percent increase in households headed by individuals over aged 65 while an additional 5,400 new workers will be needed, creating strong future demand for this type of product. Downtown's current residential mix is roughly evenly split between owner occupied and rental housing, with a vast majority of units built prior to 1940. Although these units represent a unique and distinctive residential option for downtown, overall unit growth has not kept pace with changes in population over the past half-century.

Global Trends Impacting Downtowns

Although Sheboygan is classified as the center of a Micropolitan region by the US Census, its economy is impacted by larger trends at the regional, state and national level. A number of these trends, including demographic and lifestyle changes and the rise of global competition for customers and talent are likely to influence Sheboygan's local market over the coming decades. This Plan accommodates these larger trends and local market demands, creating opportunities for Harbor Centre to grow and evolve in ways that will maximize future growth potential. These global trends, compiled by Progressive Urban Management Associates and presented at the kickoff meeting for this plan, include:

Graph 4.2: Downtown Residential Units by Age



SOURCE: City of Sheboygan

- Empty nester demand for housing, healthcare and walkable neighborhoods.
- Generation X and Millennial value preference for 'lifestyle' elements and diverse communities.
- Increasing pressure to recruit, retain and educate skilled workers in the face of worker shortages.
- Dominance of women in professional occupation, and rise of single households, both of which create a demand for professional housing, including secured access properties.
- Impact of ecommerce and reduced overall spending by all consumer groups requires focus on quality, function, convenience and social opportunities.
- Rise in alternative transportation use as a percent of all trips, at the expense of automotive oriented transportation.
- Increased need for locally-based solutions and strategies with declines in federal and state funding.
- Explosive growth in technology impacting all facets of life.

Harbor Centre Market Projections

Although Harbor Centre incorporates a number of vacant or under-utilized parcels and contains several stubborn storefront vacancies, the district has not been static. More than \$45 million private dollars have been invested in the district since 2000, including commercial, retail, hospitality and residential developments. Combined, this investment has improved the downtown character, generated additional daytime and tourism activity, and filled several market gaps in the district. These developments have included notable projects such as the Nemschoff Building, the Grandstay Hotel, and senior apartments, as well as Blue Harbor Resort and associated South Pier retail and service businesses. Moving forward, there is significant opportunity to grow this level of activity through implementation of strategic recommendations in this plan.

A baseline market share was calculated for Harbor Centre to determine a market-supported level of future development. Graph 4.3 indicates Harbor Centre's share of the City's overall activity for a number of industry sectors. A number of forecasts were used. Although the market supported figures assume that Harbor Centre retains its market share in each of the categories, the recommendations are designed to foster a balanced economy with relatively equal market share of residents, employees and retail offerings. This will require an increase in residential units and professional space while also sustaining growth and activity in the retail and hospitality sectors. Benchmarks developed for the BID to track activity (provided in Chapter 7) provide a 10-year plan for increasing the market share of retail sales and residents to 12 percent of City totals, which will provide greater parity with downtown property value and employment markets.

A future market projection for 10 years of market supportable growth in residential units, professional and office space, and retail square footage was developed for the BID. Information for these projections was derived using employment and industry projections from EMSI, population growth projections, and demographic and consumer spending projections from Claritas. Information was further refined based on historic trends at the local level. These projections, discussed in more detail below, support an additional 178,000 square feet of office or professional space, 376 residential units, and 65,000 square feet of retail space over the next ten years. Although new apartment construction could begin immediately, existing vacant office

Graph 4.3: Harbor Centre Market Share of City



SOURCE: US Census, ESRI, City, County, Tourism

and retail space will need to be absorbed before new construction activity is warranted.

Residential Growth Projections

Residential growth projections for Harbor Centre benefit not only from continued population growth in the City and County, but also to the larger demographic shift which increases the preference for rental and multifamily housing options over traditional single family development. The 376 units projected to be supported within Harbor Centre is based on the following factors: 80 units required to achieve equilibrium vacancy of 5 percent in current market, 200 percent increase in households headed by individuals under age 30 or over age 65, which have the strongest preference for rental housing (63 units), strong workforce growth projections for downtown, of which ten percent can be expected to live downtown (53 units), and Harbor Centre's continued ability to attract its market share of 12 percent of new residential households formed in the City over the next ten years (180 units).

Retail Growth Projections

Retail spending growth projections are based on several factors. These include: anticipated consumer household spending growth of 2.6 percent annually (projected by Claritas) and increased demand from residential and

employment growth projections (at current capture rates). The growth in consumer spending alone generates \$1.1 million over ten years, while the growth in spending demand from an expanding City population (2,268 new residents in 10 years according to ESRI) generates \$3.7 million. Growth in downtown residential and workforce populations, which tend to spend a greater percentage of their income in downtown, will generate \$2.8 million in demand (\$5,000 per household and \$20 per week per worker, based on ICSC research). This combined \$6.5 million in consumer demand would support 66,000 square feet at current average earnings. However, this projection anticipates that per square foot sales will increase to a national average of \$180 per square foot, reducing the recommended new construction to 36,000 of new retail space in Harbor Centre. This average assumes a mix of higher grossing regional chain stores and independent local shops.

Office Growth Projections

Harbor Centre currently contains businesses employing roughly 12 percent of all Sheboygan workers. According to EMSI projections, over the next ten years, industries which are appropriate for a downtown environment are expected to grow by 4.2 percent in the City, while manufacturing, transportation and other non-urban professions are expected to remain stagnant in terms of hiring. Within the growth industries, approximately 8,179 workers are expected to be employed in the City in sectors which utilize office type environments. Although two thirds of these workers will be required to replace retiring employees, several local industry sectors are anticipated to see continued growth and expansion. This is a positive factor for downtown, as professional and service firms tend to prefer urban environments, in contrast to manufacturing uses. The Harbor Centre's market share of these employees is 892 workers. Given today's average space ratio of 150-200 square feet per employee, approximately 134,000-178,000 square feet of office space will be needed to support this growth. One caveat to this projection for Sheboygan is the tendency of growth to occur within a few large employers which have traditionally focused on campus-oriented growth. It may be necessary to recruit one or more larger employers to locate headquarters or select corporate divisions within Harbor Centre for the area to attract its share of professional employment growth.

Streetscape & Urban Design Assessment

As a central hub for local and visitor activity, Harbor Centre should be accessible and easy to navigate via a variety of transportation modes. The length of the district (approximately one mile from Indiana Avenue to Michigan Avenue) and limitations presented by the Sheboygan River makes navigation more challenging for those unfamiliar with the district, increasing the importance of wayfinding signage, streetscaping, and landmarks.

Urban Design

Several distinctive architectural styles are present in Harbor Centre, ranging from late 19th century and early 20th century historic structures along 8th Street to the nautical-inspired Riverfront and South Pier areas. Side streets in the district include more contemporary residential and commercial architecture. Although several historic neighborhood districts and a historic church district exist adjacent to downtown, there are no commercial historic districts in Sheboygan. The presence of newer infill development along the corridor limits the City's ability to create a contiguous historic district along 8th Street based on the percentage of non-contributing buildings. Newer 8th Street development includes mid-century developments such as the US Bank building and newer buildings which adhere more closely to traditional development styles.

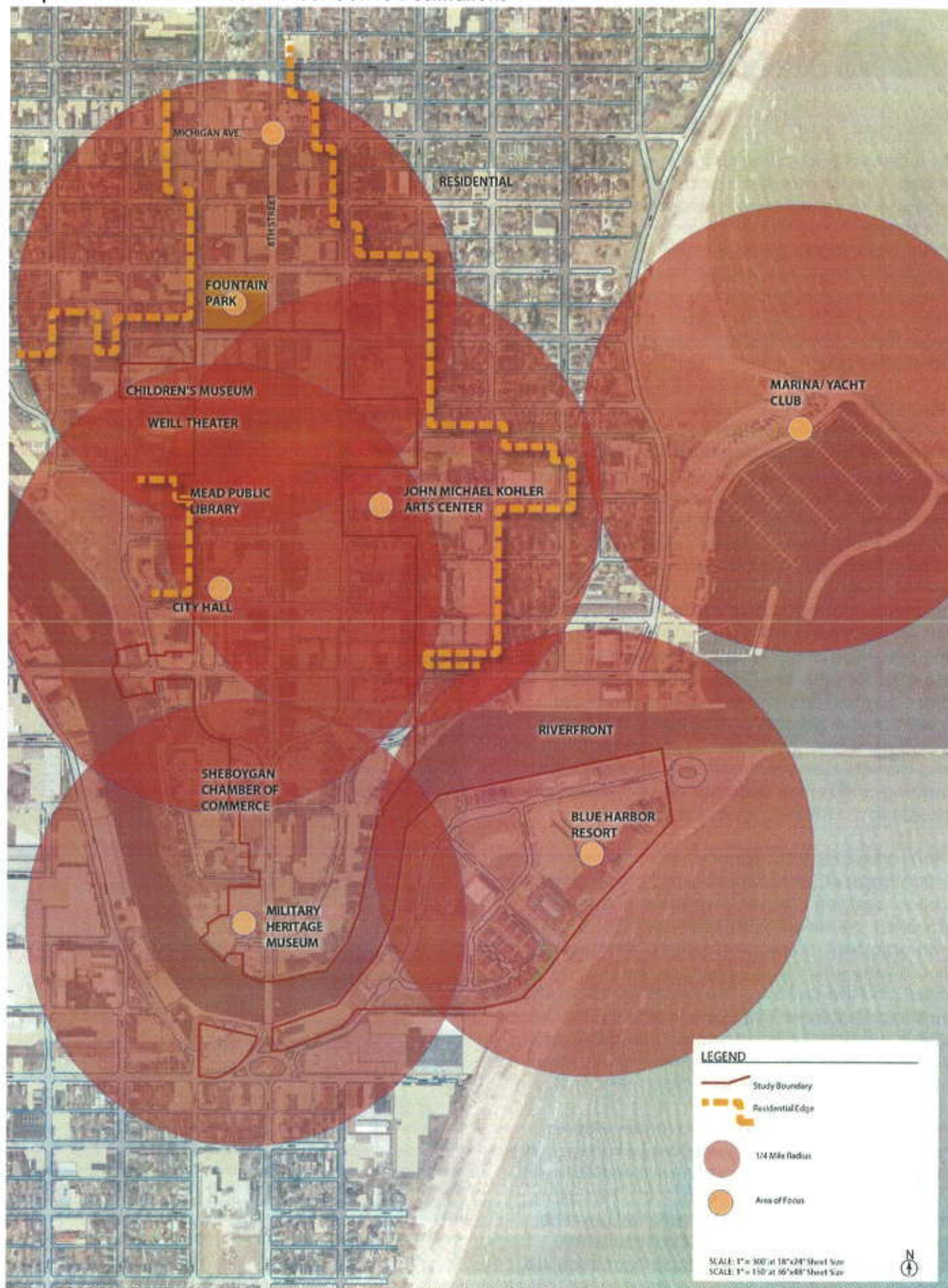
There are several blocks or combinations of blocks within Harbor Centre which feature properties with limited aesthetic appeal, whether as a result of vacancy, deferred maintenance, incompatibility with adjacent historic structures, or storefront treatments which limit interaction between the street and the building. The presence of clusters of buildings that have not been maintained or were poorly designed with respect to the public realm can limit pedestrian activity, resulting in diminished economic activity in certain areas of downtown.

Previous planning initiatives have developed comprehensive design guidelines which regulate property improvements and new development styles within the Riverfront and South Pier areas. However, no similar design regulations exist for the 8th Street corridor, which has resulted in some property updates which detract from the



Architectural styles along 8th Street range from historic to contemporary, often on the same block.

Map 5.0: Distance between Harbor Centre Destinations



traditional downtown pedestrian experience. Newer developments that have failed to reach their full potential due to a lack of holistic consideration of issues such as density and parking also limit the potential for redevelopment and may discourage potential developers. Although the City has a robust design assistance and façade improvement program, utilization of the program has been limited, and additional tools are necessary to preserve and restore remaining historic structures while promoting quality design on available infill sites.

Vehicular Connections

As presented in the location and context discussion in Chapter 2, Erie Avenue and Indiana Avenue represent the major points of entry into Harbor Centre, with an additional River crossing at Pennsylvania Avenue. Because of the riverfront and lakeshore, virtually all visitors who do not live in adjacent neighborhoods to the North will enter via one of these major entrance corridors. The City has invested in vehicular wayfinding signage which directs visitors to downtown, Harbor Centre and several destinations within Harbor Centre including South Pier, Riverfront, the Marina and other Lakeshore amenities. This signage extends into the Harbor Centre area, where additional signage directs visitors to public parking, City Hall and other public amenities. With the exception of several transition areas between one-way and two-way traffic and a non-traditional roundabout layout at the intersection of 8th Street and Indiana Avenue, vehicular access and connectivity is generally strong for visitors traveling to or through Harbor Centre.

Parking

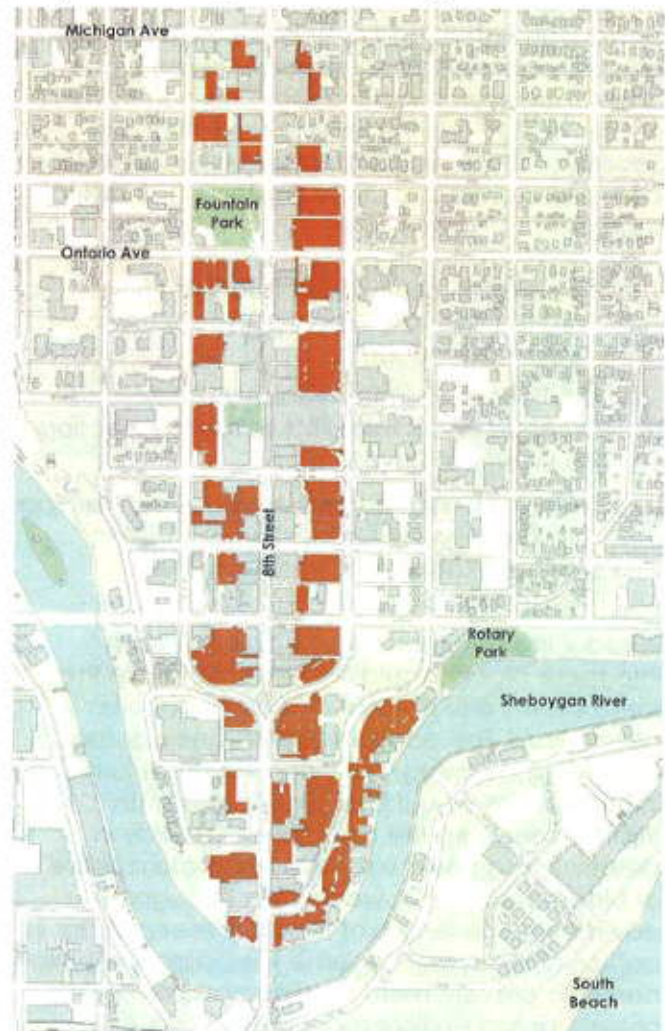
Within Harbor Centre, all commercial corridors have affordable metered on-street parking, and additional parking is available in several public lots along 7th and 9th Streets. Many business owners alluded to a perceived parking issue, in which customers felt there was a lack of parking if they were unable to park in front of their intended destination. Parking lot utilization rates and revenues suggest that there are several under-utilized lots along the corridor, which present redevelopment opportunities in themselves or may be used to meet parking demand as nearby properties redevelop.



Existing wayfinding signage.



Map 5.1: Existing Surface Parking



Approximately 40% of the surface area along the 8th Street corridor is used as surface parking lots (highlighted in orange above).

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections

Although a number of attractions within Harbor Centre attract sizeable visitor traffic, few of these destinations are located in proximity to one another, as shown in Map 5.0. The one-quarter mile radius depicted on the map represents the distance generally considered to be comfortably walkable for most pedestrians. Destinations further than one-quarter mile are generally not visible and require greater commitment. Encouraging trips of greater distance can be accomplished through an emphasis on wayfinding, visual landmarks, an engaging streetscape, and cross marketing between destinations and businesses.

Streetscape

Sheboygan has made a number of positive investments in streetscape amenities. Street trees, decorative light poles, street furniture and decorative sidewalk treatments are present throughout a majority of downtown, and pedestrian amenities such as marked crosswalks, pedestrian signals and curb bump outs are also present in many areas, especially along 8th Street. However, there are some blocks or groups of blocks that lack this level of streetscaping. Several of these blocks represent key connections between individual activity centers in the district, such as:

- The stretch of 8th Street from the River to Virginia Avenue, which is a key gateway area from the south;
- Portions of Virginia Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue and S Franklin Avenue connecting to Riverfront Drive;
- New York and Niagara Avenues connecting 8th Street to the Grandstay Hotel, John Michael Kohler Art Center and infill residential.

Introducing common streetscape elements into these blocks would reinforce the sense that these streets also contain or lead to popular destinations. The addition of bike lanes, bump outs, terrace paving/planters, and street furniture in these areas would help draw pedestrian traffic throughout the downtown. Diversity in streetscaping could also help generate a sense of place and assist in wayfinding throughout downtown. The length of the 8th Street corridor in particular lends itself to some specialization, which can help prevent mental fatigue and encourage pedestrians to explore more of the area than they may otherwise. Streetscape enhancements, district divisions and themes are discussed



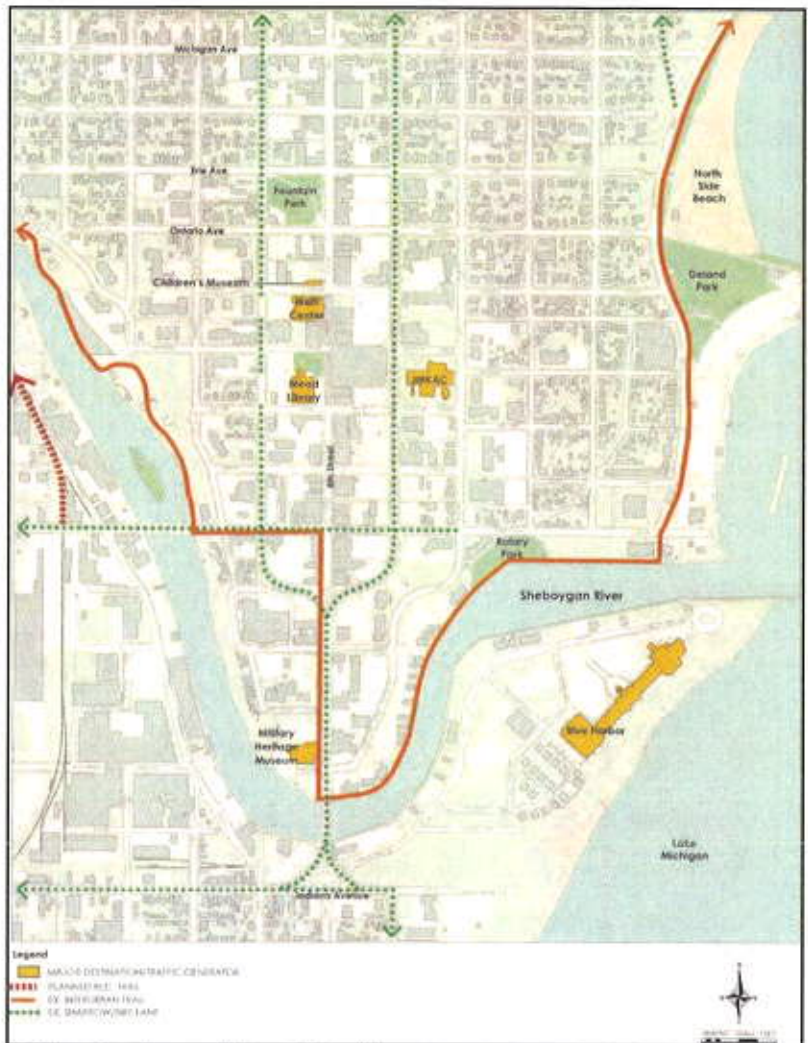
Inconsistent levels of streetscaping throughout the district make some areas feel less inviting than others.

further in Chapter 7, Strategic Recommendations, and Chapter 8, Design Guidelines.

Bicycle Connections

Several regional bike networks connect through downtown Sheboygan. The designated bike routes are located on 7th and 9th Streets through the heart of downtown, crossing the river via a shared use lane on 8th Street. Pennsylvania Avenue is signed as the East-West connection, and a dedicated bicycle/ pedestrian bridge is currently under construction across the river near this location. Bicycles are also allowed on the Lake Michigan shoreline trails. The City has installed a number of single loop bike racks in and around downtown, but the small size and limited nature of these racks do not make them highly visible to cyclists. Visitors unfamiliar with the City would likely need to search out these racks as they near their destination.

Map 5.2: Bicycle Facilities



Existing & planned bicycle facilities



Improved facilities for bicycles will encourage more young people and families to explore downtown.

Harbor Centre Vision & Master Plan

This chapter elaborates on the elements of the Harbor Centre Vision and introduces the three major Master Plan elements which will achieve this vision. Together, these two items provide the framework for future implementation efforts.

Vision

In order to establish a set of strategic recommendations and program of work for the BID, it is critical that a common vision be established which will allow the BID and City to easily convey the future of Harbor Centre. This vision will be achieved by the successful implementation of the Plan. Drawing on market analysis to uncover unique strengths and public input to prioritize outcomes, the following vision statement was established for the Harbor Centre.

Harbor Centre will be:

- Economically Prosperous: Retaining and attracting businesses, jobs, investment and economic growth will create additional market opportunities in the district.
- Vibrant: New residential options create an active 24-hour community and support expanded retail, arts, culture, food and service offerings.
- Inviting: Well-preserved and restored historic buildings, complementary new development and attractive public spaces attract visitors.
- Connected: Residents and visitors find Harbor Centre easy to navigate and are aware of events, activities and businesses available within the district.

This vision will lead to a more cohesive, connected and vibrant district which attracts, retains, and rewards visitors with a wide variety of amenities and attractions. The success of the Plan will ultimately come through a coordinated effort which addresses opportunities and challenges facing both individual blocks and the district as a whole. Providing unique and interesting activities and destinations at locations throughout Harbor Centre will promote diversity, increase opportunities to reach new populations and provide for a greater variety of residential and business options.

Master Plan

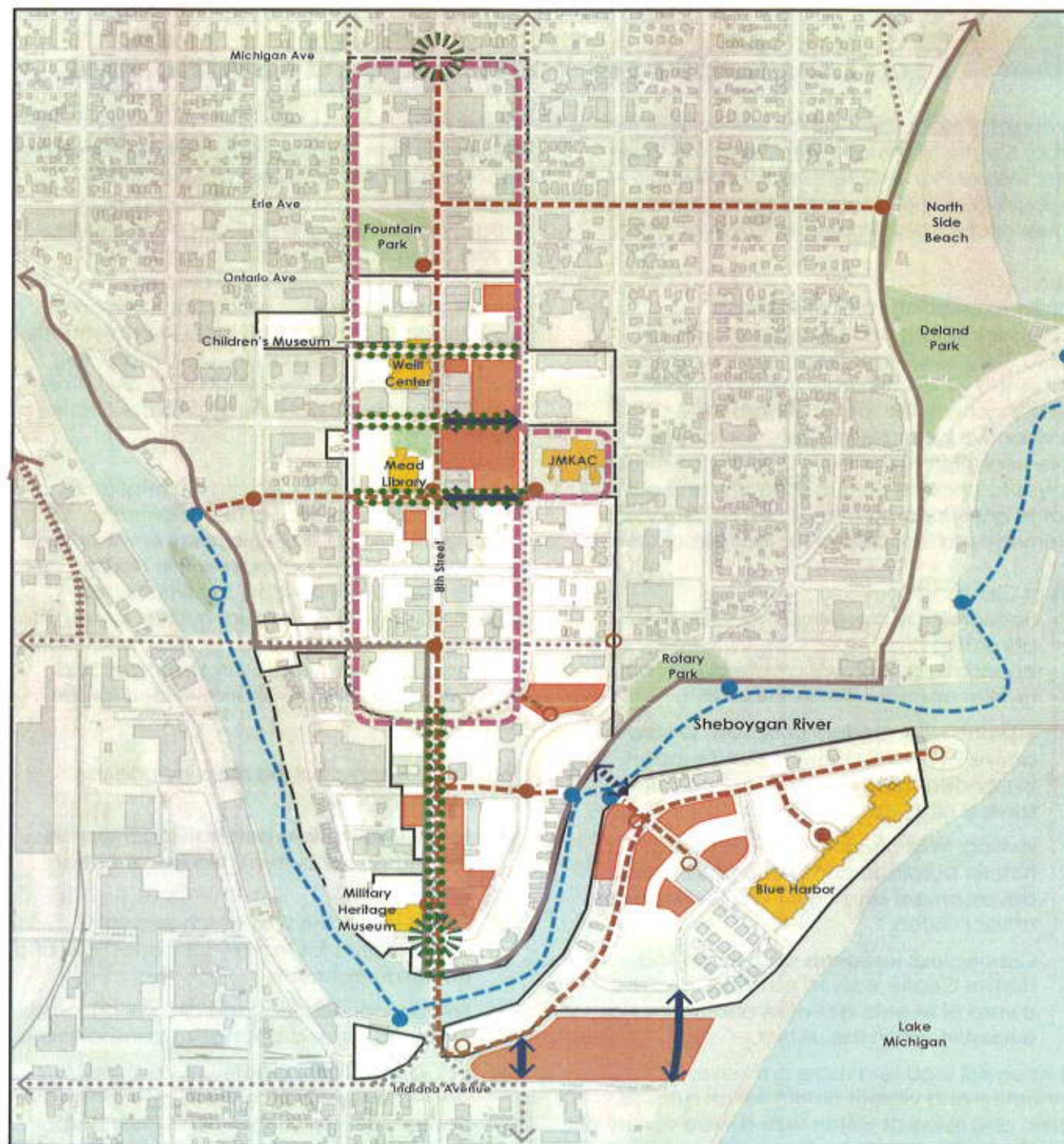
The Master Plan identifies specific transformational opportunities and strategic activities which, together, will have a measurable and visual impact on the look and feel of Harbor Centre, as well as on the economic opportunities available to its businesses and property owners. The Master Plan recommends various organizational changes, physical improvements, strategic partnerships and focused marketing and outreach efforts for the BID, City and other partners in order to achieve the Harbor Centre Vision.

Map 6.0 illustrates the geographic relationship between individual Master Plan elements. Although individual strategies may emphasize individual properties or nodes within Harbor Centre, the Plan as a whole maximizes the opportunities within individual districts to create a stronger overall downtown economy. Chapter 7 expands on complementary strategies and action items which are recommended for the Harbor Centre.

Elements illustrated on the map include the following categories:

- Major Destinations and traffic generators that represent current and future activity centers.
- Redevelopment sites which present opportunities for market-supported infill and private investment.
- Primary connections and circulation routes for vehicular and alternative transportation
- Future locations of gateway features, streetscape enhancements and roadway connections to connect and unify Harbor Centre elements.

Map 6.0: Harbor Centre Master Plan Elements



Legend

- CURRENT BID BOUNDARY
- - - POTENTIAL BID EXPANSION
- MAJOR DESTINATION/TRAFFIC GENERATOR
- POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITE
- PROPOSED ARTS/CULTURE/FOOD DISTRICT
- ENHANCE STREETSCAPE

Circulation

- PLANNED REC. TRAIL
- EX. INTERURBAN TRAIL
- EX. SHARROW/BIKE LANE
- PROPOSED LAND/WATER NODE-PRIMARY
MAY INCLUDE BIKE RACKS, DRINKING WATER,
DIRECTORY/WAYFINDING SIGNAGE, SEATING,
LIGHTING
- PROPOSED LAND/WATER NODE-SECONDARY
MAY INCLUDE DIRECTORY/WAYFINDING SIGNAGE,
LIGHTING
- PROPOSED ROUTE- LAND
- PROPOSED ROUTE- WATER
- PROPOSED GATEWAY
MAY INCLUDE UNIQUE PAVING, OVERHEAD
SIGNAGE, PUBLIC ART, LIGHTING, WAYFINDING/
DIRECTORY SIGNAGE, SEATING
- PROPOSED STREET CONNECTION
- POTENTIAL BRIDGE CONNECTION



Public Support and Engagement

The Master Plan was developed with significant public input. Elements included in the Vision and Core Elements reflect the priorities of stakeholders and participants. Although the BID will serve as a lead entity for much of the Plan Implementation, together with the City, Chamber and other civic partners, it is important that individuals, businesses and other groups have a role in developing and supporting the Master Plan efforts.

Over the course of the Master Planning process, participants were asked to identify their top priorities for the future of Harbor Centre. Although responses were received from a wide variety of individuals, the top three priorities were identified by at least three of the major age groups, as illustrated on the graphic below. Increased downtown housing, the most popular improvement overall (favored by 68% of respondents) was only a top three priority for older adults.

These priorities, especially building restoration, business expansion and housing, feature prominently in the Master Plan. Although the plan does not recommend significant additional retail square footage, it does introduce a number of strategies to enhance and connect existing retailers, and to increase the number of storefronts featuring active and pedestrian-oriented businesses and facade treatments.

Figure 6.0: Harbor Centre Priorities: Survey Responses



